

School Committee Meeting Minutes  
Shirley Middle School  
September 28, 2004

Present: Gary Bourassa, Chairperson  
Hugh Muffoletto, Vice Chairperson  
Paul Wilson  
Bob Prescott  
Don Parker

Also Present: Dr. Thomas Scott, Superintendent  
Patricia Stern, Business Manager  
Joe DeGuglielmo, DEAC representative  
Cheryl Hayden, FinCom

The meeting began at 7:02 p.m.

Public Participation:

As there was none, the committee moved forward to discuss Old Business.

Old Business:

Patricia Stern reviewed the FY05 budget summary that she had prepared for the meeting. She explained that this summary was a comparison of the May 11, 2004 budget with the September 15, 2004 version. She stated that major increases to the out of district budget and changes to how the Circuit Breaker is funded have affected the revised September 15, 2004 budget. The changes have resulted in a \$228,098 shortfall from the Town Meeting budget version dated May 11, 2004. Of this amount, \$98,048 has been kept aside. This figure represents \$18,000 in rental fees for FLLAC classrooms, \$15,836 reimbursement due from the School Building Committee for custodial time and \$64,212 for the unfilled SPED Director position. Mrs. Stern explained that she and Dr. Scott are concerned that the numbers of children from Devens and School Choice are not going to be as high as they have been in recent years and that it was prudent to hold these funds in reserve to cover any shortfall. Mr. Muffoletto asked how long this money may need to be held aside. Dr. Scott stated that the Department of Education should notify the school by December of its school choice amounts.

Mr. Parker mentioned that the school should develop a list of all the items the school is currently doing without since the budget's inception last year. The list should include the reduced custodian hours, cut supplies and substitute positions and be presented at Town Meeting so that the community can see just how much the schools are struggling. Dr. Scott and Mrs. Stern will prepare the list, including what may also be eliminated should the schools not receive the additional funding.

The committee reviewed the second reading of the Student Transportation Fees. A motion was made by Mr. Parker to approve the policy. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Mrs. Stern updated the committee on the progress she has made regarding parent concerns. She informed them that she has set up monthly meetings with the custodial staff as well as assigning specific tasks to each of them. The principal's will be responsible for daily inspections of the

restrooms. Mr. Prescott suggested placing restroom log charts in all of the restrooms so that the custodians can record that they have done their task.

Mrs. Stern addressed the Board of Health issues stemming from Mr. Grossman's visit to LAW. Mrs. Stern stated that the possible asbestos that was cited was in fact not asbestos. She stated that the univentilators will be cleaned as will the gym locker room area. This locker room area may be used for additional storage for the school. The nails and open door issues have been rectified.

The improperly fitting toilet seats will be removed and replaced with the correct elongated seats. It was recommended that a plumber do the change-out as these are old fixtures and may be difficult to work with. Mrs. Stern stated that the cost for this project would be approximately \$1140 for 18 toilets. Mr. Muffoletto suggested we do the work ourselves, anticipating a savings of over \$600 for the work. As these seats are improperly fitted it is safe to assume that someone already changed the seats and the concern over the fixtures being fragile may not be worth the extra cost. Mr. Muffoletto suggested that perhaps a volunteer group may be able to do this project. A parent who had previously expressed concern over volunteering to assist with other bathroom issues stated that she is no longer interested. She stated that she has been advised that this may be a liability problem should any negative repercussions stem from her help. She was informed that should anything happen she would most definitely be covered under the Town's insurance and would not need to worry about being sued.

Dr. Scott briefly informed those who were present that the school committee meetings have been rescheduled to the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

#### Business Affairs:

Mrs. Stern reviewed Payroll Warrants 711,811,311 and 611. She also reviewed Payables Warrant 412. Mrs. Stern asked for guidance from the committee as to how they would like to receive the school committee packets as well as the warrants for their review. After a brief discussion it was decided that the school committee packets would go home with the children of Mr. Wilson, Mr. Bourassa, Mr. Prescott and Mr. DeGuglielmo. The packets would be available after 1 pm at LAW for Mr. Parker and at the Town Hall for Mr. Muffoletto and Ms. Hayden. The warrants would be dropped off at the Police Station at the close of the business day, with the third person to review and sign the warrant responsible for returning it to the school committee meeting.

#### Transfer Warrants:

Mrs. Stern explained that the transfer warrants are common at the end of the fiscal year. These usually occur so as to utilize all grant monies and make any corrections to accounts where funding may not have been available when needed. It was suggested that all transfer warrants be presented for review at school committee meetings.

#### New Business:

Dr. Scott reviewed the current after school programs situation. He stated that these programs are very important to the education of the children and would like to continue to offer them. Due to the current budget, we will need to offer these programs at a cost to those who wish to participate. LEAP programs (cooking, arts & crafts, etc.) would be offered at \$5 per week (estimated), Instrumental Music would be at \$10 per week, Instrumental Band would cost \$15 per week. These program fees are designed to cover the cost of staffing the program. Any additional costs would be covered by the Bemis Associates donation. There would also be a charge of \$55 (estimated) per season per sport for athletics. Additional costs are expected to be covered by gym rental fees from outside associations and from the Booster Club. The Bemis Associates donation will also cover scholarships to those families who can't afford the fees and also to cover any

unexpected shortfalls. Mr. Muffoletto suggested having the children do fundraisers to help support their organizations. Dr. Scott recommended that the committee vote to begin implementing these fees. Mr. Parker motioned to approve the fees. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Dr. Scott reviewed the 2004 MCAS scores. He explained that overall, the scores were up throughout the district. All grades tested showed higher than state average scores with the only exception being grade 4. Dr. Scott explained that grade 4 results were due to the high population of SPED children. He also stated that more services need to be provided to the SPED children and, with the elimination of two middle school SPED teachers, he is concerned that these needs won't be met.

Information:

Dr. Scott commented on the PTA brochure that will be distributed to families. He stated that the PTA is a strong supporter of the schools and urged parents to become involved.

Cheryl Hayden explained that in 2006 the town should receive 100% reimbursement from the State Building Assistance program. This money would eliminate the state's portion of the costs associated with building the middle school.

Public Participation:

Cliff Bailey suggested that a volunteer offer to research and apply for any state, local or private grants.

Mr. Parker motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Karen Gutheil